

Remarks**I. Status of the Claims**

Claims 1-44 are pending in the application. Claims 13-40 have been allowed. Claims 1-5, 8-12, 41 and 42 have been rejected. Claims 6 and 7 have been objected to. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Claim 44 is added.

II. Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5, 8-12, 41 and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0029567 (Timmins). Applicants have amended claim 1 and respectfully traverse the rejection.

Amended claim 1 describes a method for providing an information assistance service, and has been amended to require “receiving, by an information assistance provider, a call from a caller, the call including at least one criterion and a request that the information assistance provider identify one or more entities satisfying the at least one criterion” and “conducting a data search, based on the at least one criterion, in response to the information assistance request.”

Amended claim 1 also requires “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the data search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of independent entities, respectively.” Amended claim 1 additionally requires “repeating the following (a) through (e) one or more times before the caller’s call is terminated:

- (a) selecting a first telephone number from the record;
- (b) establishing a first communication by connecting the caller’s call to the first telephone number;
- (c) detecting a predetermined call status condition relating to the first communication;

(d) in response to the predetermined call status condition, selecting a second telephone number from the record; and

(e) establishing a second communication by connecting the caller's call to the second telephone number."

Support for amended claim 1 is found at pages 9-15, for example.

Timmins discloses a system for providing services over a communications network including private directory and calendar data synchronization, identity pre-validation, etc.

[Abstract] A user may create, maintain or access one or more contacts folders containing the names and contact numbers of friends, business associates, etc. [0081] At the caller's request, an operator may retrieve the contact number of a person specified in a contacts folder and connect the caller thereto. [0101, 0104]

Nowhere does Timmins' disclosure teach or suggest the combination of amended claim 1. Timmins discloses two types of data searches conducted by an operator: (1) retrieval of a user's profile/contacts folder, based on the user's name, ANI or other identifier (see [0043]); and (2) retrieval, from the user's contacts folder, of various telephone numbers (home, business, mobile, etc.) associated with an individual ("Bob" in an example disclosed in [0101]-[0104]). Neither of these types of searches, however, satisfies the claim limitations of amended claim 1.

The profile/contacts folder, while containing a plurality of telephone numbers, is retrieved based on the user's name or other identifier (such as an ANI). It is not retrieved through a search conducted based on "the at least one criterion" received in a "request that the information assistance provider identify one or more entities satisfying the at least one criterion."

On the other hand, while Timmins discloses an operator conducting a search to retrieve various numbers associated with an individual named "Bob," such numbers are not associated

with “independent entities,” as required by amended claim 1. In the example provided by Timmins, all of the telephone numbers that are retrieved are associated with a single individual named Bob, and are in fact stored together in a single contacts folder in association with one another. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims (2-5, 8-12, 41 and 42), are patentable over the cited art. The dependent claims also contain patentable limitations.

III. Claim Objections

Claims 6 and 7 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

For the reasons set forth above, amended claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. Therefore, claims 6 and 7, which depend from amended claim 1, are also patentable over the cited art.

IV. New Claim 44

New claim 44 describes a method for providing an information assistance service, and requires “receiving a call from a caller, the call including an information assistance request,” and “conducting a search of a database not associated with the caller, in response to the information assistance request.” New claim 44 also requires “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of independent entities, respectively.” New claim 44 additionally requires “establishing communications connecting the caller’s call to two or more of the telephone numbers in the record before a termination of the caller’s call.”

The cited art does not teach or suggest “conducting a search of a database not associated with the caller, in response to the information assistance request” and “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of independent entities, respectively,” as required by new claim 44. Therefore, new claim 44 is patentable over the cited art. Support for new claim 44 is found on pages 9-15, for example.

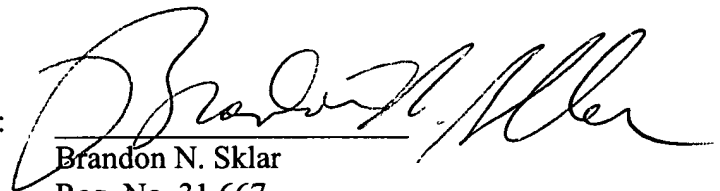
V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, each of claims 1-12 and 41-44 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of these claims is requested and allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 13, 2006

By:



Brandon N. Sklar
Reg. No. 31,667
(212) 836-8653

Kaye Scholer LLP
425 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10022